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Objectification of Daisy in *The Great Gatsby*

In *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Daisy is described as desirable because she has wealth and status and it is obvious that Gatsby and Tom don't want her because of her personality, but to compete with each other. Daisy is aware that Gatsby and Tom treat her like a prize they can win, and as though she is incapable of expressing her own thoughts. She gives clues that she knows she is smart and capable, yet she allows this treatment to continue. Throughout *The Great Gatsby*, Daisy is treated like an object, not a person, and is held to different standards than the men in the novel.

Daisy is treated like a child who can't make her own decisions or have her own opinions. Gatsby and Tom always speak for her and don't ask her what she thinks. Gatsby and Tom get into an argument about whether Daisy ever loved Tom, or just wanted to marry someone who was in the same social class. Tom states that Daisy, "Sometimes she gets foolish ideas in her head and doesn't know what she's doing" (131). Tom is saying that Daisy always loved him and that she is just a silly girl who can't think on her own. Also, by saying she is "foolish" and "doesn't know what she's doing" he is calling her dumb. Daisy is treated like her feelings don't matter. They don't care about who she loves and they don't take her happiness into consideration.

Daisy is held to a different standard than Tom; he can do whatever he wants with no consequences, while Daisy is ridiculed when she attempts to do what she wants. When

Daisy kisses Gatsby at a party and says she loves him, Tom says, “What a low, vulgar girl!” (116). It's quite ironic how Tom would say that about her because he is living with another woman. This shows that the people in the book hold women to a different standard and don't have the same expectations for men. If she and Tom held each other to the same standard, than he would be publically harassed for being in a relationship with Myrtle, or Daisy would be able to kiss and say she loved whoever she wanted without anyone having a second thought.

Daisy isn't treated like a human; she is treated like an object to be owned, or a step towards someone else's success. This has to do with the fact that she is a wealthy woman who is at the top of the social pyramid. “Her voice is full of money” (120) says Gatsby, while Nick is trying to describe why Daisy's voice is so attractive. In other words, Gatsby is saying that he doesn't love Daisy because of her character, but because of the class advantages she holds. Nick says about Gatsby, “It excited him, too, that many men had already loved Daisy—It increased her value in his eyes” (149). This is another example of how Gatsby sees her as a possession; he thinks she is worth his time because so many men want her, and he gets pride from the fact that she only wants him. Gatsby admits to Nick that he never intended to fall in love with Daisy. Nick also says about Gatsby, “He had intended, probably, to take what he could and go—but now he found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail” (149). Because he says he is “following a grail” he means that he isn't in love with Daisy, but he is obsessed with her and needs to have her, again saying that she is an object of value, not a person.

Daisy is not content with being treated like she's foolish because she knows she's not. Daisy is aware of how she's seen when she says about her own daughter, “I'm glad

it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool" (17). This shows that not only do Gatsby and Tom underestimate Daisy, but also Daisy knows what they value her for; she wishes that she were not smart enough to be aware of how others only value her wealth and appearance. Daisy seems to have come to accept the way Gatsby and Tom treat her because she knows they think she is foolish, but does not fight that reputation.

There are many examples of Daisy being treated as a possession and of the men trying to win her. Daisy knows she's smart and capable of accomplishing more, yet Gatsby and Tom treat her like she needs them to survive. What is interesting is that even though Daisy seems like she's helpless, her awareness of Gatsby and Tom's need to feel powerful allows her to figure out how she should act in order to live a comfortable life.

Works Cited

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. Scribner, 1925. Print.